

Officer on Duty: How An Image Can Change In An Instant

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Abstract

The deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice sparked an uproar in many communities across the United States. These incidents brought to light that there is an issue that remains prevalent between citizen and police officers. The New York Police Department, Ferguson Police Department, and the Cleveland Department of Police have all dealt with tension involving the communities they serve. Since these incidents changes have been made within each department. Some had the help of the Department of Justice to reform old polices. While law enforcement does what they believe it is necessary to protect the public, sometimes their actions are seen as unprofessional and unwarranted. To maintain the impression of the motto “protect and serve” to the media and the citizens they shield from harm, they attempt to restore their image when questionable events arise. This paper explains and examines comments made by these three police departments, and how they attempted to restore their image in the public.

Keywords: Image restoration theory, William Benoit, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Ferguson, New York, Cleveland, law enforcement, public, media

Chapter One: Introduction

Damage control can be a tedious and gut-wrenching process for public relations professionals. Although part of their job is to clean up the messes of others, it is difficult for businesses and famous figures to keep everyone content. Due to social media, it can become a task for a person or business to regain prominence once they made a mistake. In the United States, society can condemn those in power, by expressing their feelings through outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Recent examples include the Donald Zimmer , Ray Rice, and the cases involving questionable police conduct, specifically towards minority communities. In all of these events, people expressed their opinions and wanted justice to be swift. While these situations concluded with public relations agents unable to save Zimmer's and Rice's reputations and jobs, three other cases have the nation divided. They involved police brutality and the questionable deaths of three individuals. The question of police brutality has once again become a national topic in the United States, and public relations professionals are attempting to reduce the stain of the police force through social media, interviews conducted on television, and press statements. Image restoration and crisis communication prove that speculation of police bigotry and the public's inability to forgive has led to a quick judgment and emotional society.

It is important to establish the difference between bigotry and racism. A bigot is someone who unfairly shows dislike to other people or ideas (Coates, 2013). Racism is a policy or system of government, based upon or fostering such a doctrine(Radcliffe, 2012). In all three cases, a Caucasian police officer killed an African American citizen. To make matters worse for the police departments, two of the three suspects were unarmed while the third had a toy gun. Because of this trend, it is easy to view police officers as bigoted immediately after the incidents.

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However, this allegation should not be made. In a Time Magazine article written by NBA Hall-of-Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (2014), he states “The Department of Justice study shows that in the U.S. between 2003 and 2009, among arrest-related deaths there’s very little difference among blacks, whites, or Latinos. However, the study doesn’t tell us how many were unarmed.”

Also the stereotype that police officers ruthlessly kill African American males is false. Valarie Richardson (2015) reported that police officers are less likely to shoot black suspects. Richardson found a study conducted by the Journal of Experimental Criminology. The study concluded that while police officers felt more threatened by African American suspects, it takes longer for them to pull the trigger than against Caucasian and Hispanic men. Young African American males are 14 times more likely to commit a violent act such as murder than young Caucasian men (McWhorter, 2013). This comment may be used to justify the cases of Michael Brown and Garner, and Rice. However, it is noted that Rice did not commit a crime. At any rate, some in society view these three incidents as racist because Caucasian officers attacked innocent African American citizens, but that is inaccurate. The lens on these events should be were the officers bigoted toward their suspect. Albeit that Garner, Brown, and Rice are African Americans who all suffered the same fate at the hands of Caucasian police officers, their circumstances and stories are different.

William Benoit created image restoration theory to analyze how public relations professionals, businesses and famous figures handle incidents. Benoit defines image restoration “as strategies used to mitigate image damage following a threat to a reputation (organization or personal)” (Blosenbauer, 2014, p. 6). Although image restoration theory is fairly new, it has been a resource in studying strategies used in these situations. Benoit (1995) tested his theory on several incidents that involved people and businesses in the 1990s. A few examples are Queen

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Elizabeth's comments after the death of Princess Diana, Texaco and racism and the Coca Cola and Pepsi competitions from 1990-1992 (Benoit). Benoit used five strategies in order to study how these people and organizations attempted to restore their image. The first is denial, in which the accused states that they did not commit an offensive act. Next is evading responsibility where the accused makes claims that their actions were justified, or the accused states they were misinformed about the situation. Reducing offensiveness is the third strategy where the accused attempts to reduce the negative feedback they receive from the committed act. The fourth strategy is corrective action, which is when the accused admits there is a problem. Lastly, the accused may ask for forgiveness of the act they committed which is called mortification.

Crisis communication is also a part of image restoration. Crisis communication is designed to protect and defend an individual or company that is facing public challenge to its reputation (Barrera, 2013). Many events that happen involves a hasty statement to quickly reduce damage that had been made. The media has been used to aid how crisis management is done. James Garnett and Alexander Kouzmin (2007) stated "Crises are substantial as media events because of the mass media's tendency to treat crises and disasters as discrete events instead of periodic or even anticipated occurrences within technological, political, ecological, or economic systems" (p. 387). Although the use of image restoration and crisis communication are similar, they function during different times of an event. Crisis communication normally occurs immediately after a crisis happens. A person or a business will attempt to reassure the public that everything is under control. Image restoration involves more time of development with a person or business. When this method is used, a public figure or organization take certain steps that will help restore its image. However, when crisis communication and image restoration are used together it can effectively be useful.

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Crisis communication helps businesses and people actively and effectively respond after an event occurs. Normally, this is done to minimize the damage to a persons' or organization's public image. In Granville King *Crisis Management & Team Effectiveness* (2002) he quotes Coombs saying "A crisis management team should possess excellent decision-making skills between group members and other employees with the organization" (p. 236). Coombs's (2007) study of teamwork within these situations can be broken down into three stages: pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis. Pre-crisis involves prevention plans to reduce the risk of crisis. Crisis response covers what a person of corporation does to respond to an event. Lastly, post-crisis is a critique of the crisis plan to better prepare for the next crisis.

One example of how public relations used these strategies effectively is the United States response to terrorism after the September 11 attacks. Immediately after the attacks, President George W. Bush and his administration set stricter guidelines and regulations for citizens on planes, and he urged the nation to mourn those lost on that day. Marketing campaigns were created later to defend the United States from future attacks. One example that happened immediately after the attacks was the increased role of corporate security. Stephen Morrill said "... since 9/11 corporate security has a seat at the table during all crisis management events, and there is no reason for not having been there before" (Ritchey, 2011, p. 39).

Hurricane Katrina is an example of the ineffectiveness of how emergency teams aided citizens. Action is not the only thing that plays a part in crisis communication, just as with image restoration theory, focus must be placed on the words that leaders say after the fact. It is essential for PR firms to assure the public that the business or person is doing everything they can to correct their actions or to help in a serious event. For instance, when the New York Times called Hurricane Katrina survivors refugees instead of citizens it had a negative connotation because

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refugees are what United States call survivors in different countries. Spokeswoman for the Times Catherine Mathis defended to the Times stating, “We have used it (refugee) along with ‘evacuee,’ ‘survivor,’ ‘displaced,’ and various other terms that fit what our reporters are seeing on the ground” (Powell, 2015, p. 84).

Benoit’s theory along with Coombs crisis communication strategy is a useful guide in following the image repair process of three cases that shook the nation. While it is not noticed in many cases, elements of the image restoration theory are seen in these stories. How the police departments interact with public interviews and social media is another aspect to factor in. Another example is police officer Darren Wilson who was removed from duty when the force felt that his livelihood was threatened on the job (Johnston, 2014).

The three stories involving citizens and police officers during the summer of 2014 were reported as isolated incidents; however, the media and the African American communities saw them as a message that was aimed at minority races. These stories have once again reawakened the debate of when is force necessary for a police to use when dealing with a suspect. It has also sparked riots and protest in large cities around the United States. Citizens on social media followed and either supported or opposed the officers involved. The police departments attempted to assure the public that they are there to protect and serve. After two cases came to a verdict, plenty of questions loomed as to why a grand jury came to its judgment. At any rate, a statement from Jack Kerwick (2014) sums up the police officer roles in these three cases, “Officers of the law are obligated to enforce the laws – whether they personally believe that the laws are just or unjust, good or bad” (para. 3). In other words, similar to a basketball official calling a foul on the court, an officer has to have probable cause to commit to his action in the case of foul play with a suspect. It is critical to gain an understanding as to what happened in

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the incidents and gather an understanding and philosophy of each department using image restoration and crisis communication tactics.

The settings of each event will play an important part in the analysis because it outlines why law enforcement and the suspects interacted the way they did with one another. The first of these incidents to receive national attention took place in Staten Island, New York. This is where 43-year old Eric Garner, a Staten Island native, had his fatal encounter with police. Before this encounter, the New York Police Department (NYPD) had enforced laws to reduce crimes such as murder and drug trafficking throughout the city, with its “stop and frisk” policy, which was a crisis communication tactic. The NYPD chose this tactic because it took the focus off of repeat offenders and honed in on the crime activity in certain areas. This policy reduced the rate of crime, and kept many criminals on high alert. The problem with “stop and frisk” is that targets of this policy were mainly African Americans and Hispanics. In a study conducted by Mike Bostock and Ford Fessenden (2014), of all people stopped and frisked 52 percent were African-American and 31 percent Hispanics were stopped by this policy in 2010. Twenty-eight percent of Hispanic and 23 percent of African Americans made up New York City’s population at that time. Three years after those statistics were released, a judge ruled the “stop and frisk” tactic as unconstitutional causing the rates of stops to decrease. Although these changes were not well received with the urban community, the policy was effective as crime rates fell over the year. This is relevant to Garner’s case because he had previous altercations with the NYPD because he illegally sold tax free products and committed other illegal acts.

Garner had made his share of profit by hustling on the streets. His actions caused him to have previous run-ins with the NYPD, and before the altercation, Garner was on probation for crimes he committed three months before. Most of his offenses were minor, unfortunately it did

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not help that one of his charges was assault. Police had been monitoring his actions since his release. Garner was confronted after he broke up a scuffle outside of a beauty salon, which is what attracted officers to the surrounding area. Garner was known to many around the Staten Island area as a peace keeper. Moments later, a police officer confronted Garner to search him. According to CNN.com (2014) and various videos recording the altercation, Garner argued with police officers for seven minutes. After pleading with plain clothes and on-duty officers that he was not doing anything wrong, a questionable chokehold was used to subdue Garner. This was after refusing to obey police orders. Garner was knocked into the glass window of the store, and forced to the ground by several police officers. Garner struggled saying the words “I can’t breathe” numerous times to officers (para. 1). Moments later he laid on the ground unconscious, police officers and emergency personnel did not administer first aid to Garner. He later died on his way to the hospital from a cardiac arrest due to the injuries he suffered from being placed in a chokehold (Mitchell, 2014).

Three weeks later, 951 miles from Staten Island, New York in Ferguson, Missouri, the United States witnessed another case involving a fatal altercation between a citizen and a police officer. Before this altercation the Ferguson Police Department (FPD) was accused of discrimination. According to the Washington Post (2015) the police department was not a reflection of the community it protected. This time it was 18-year old Mike Brown a recent graduate from Normandy High School, who found himself in a tussle with Darren Wilson, a Ferguson police officer. Despite the conflicting stories that were given by witnesses and Wilson, only two things were apparent: first, shots were fired from Wilson’s weapon and second, Brown was the recipient of six shots striking the left side of his body. Brown died on the scene from gunshot wounds when he exchanged words and wrestled with Wilson. After Brown’s death, riots

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arose from the community of Ferguson and drew national attention (Cuadra, Gamio, Kelly, Higham, 2014).

Lastly, the most controversial of the notable incidents in 2014 happened 563 miles away from Ferguson in November. While apparently playing with a toy gun, in a public park, 12-year-old Tamir Rice was shot by police at close range. Rice was suspected of pointing a real gun at onlookers in a park, though it was later learned that it was a BB gun (Ly & Hanna, 2014). Cory Shaffer (2014) said there was a lack of communication between the Cleveland dispatcher, and officers could have handled this incident differently.

This led to a Cleveland Browns football player Andrew Dawkins to wear a “Justice for Tamir Rice and John Crawford” t-shirt while warming up during a game (citation?). During an interview with MSNBC, President of the Cleveland Police Patrolmen’s Association Jeffrey Follmer responded to Dawkins by stating that his shirt was ‘pathetic’ and demanded an apology from the Browns (Ferrise, 2014, p. 1).

Some Ohio police departments have had numerous issues involving the questionable use of force. Dawkins indication of Crawford on his shirt was in response to a false police call of him pointing a gun at civilians in a Dayton, Ohio Walmart that led to police officer shooting and killing Crawford inside of the store August 5, 2014. Crawford had a BB gun that he intended to purchase in his hand and was on the phone with his girlfriend when he was killed (Ross, 2014).

Three months later, the focus was placed on Tamir Rice and the Cleveland Department of Police (CDP). This department has had an abundance of cases that involved questionable force and improper protocol. Rice may be the only innocent victim out of these three cases after he was not given any warning before being shot in what looks like a drive-by shooting by officers (King, 2014). The death of 12-year old Rice was the boiling point for the United States Attorney

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General Eric Holder. Because of misconduct, the department became one of eight to be reviewed by the Department of Justice (DOJ). The DOJ (2014) found that the CDP had over 600 excessive force cases investigated since 2010. Most of these cases are not racially fueled, and have caused a rift with the community of Cleveland and police.

Another factor to take into account is the difference among the NYPD, CDP, and FPD. They used different tactics to attack the issues they faced when explaining each event with the media. Due to the large population of the city, the NYPD has more access to training, resources and equipment than other police departments in the United States. According to the Wall Street Journal (2013) the NYPD has 77 precincts to patrol New York City's communities. The CDP and FPD does not have that amount of personnel due to the size of the areas they oversee. This is important because each police department responded differently to protest and riots after the incidents occurred.

The NYPD is the United States' largest police force and is almost certain to have run-ins regarding issues of conduct. According to Tana Ganeva and Laura Gottesdiener (2012) the NYPD has over 34,000 uniformed officers and 51,000 employees. In 2013, they also had a proposed \$4.6 billion budget. Those officers protect nearly eight million citizens of New York City. Unlike other police departments they have departments committed to defend against terrorism and aid foreign cities from London to Toronto. But due to their large size, they are viewed as a gang. According to Hunter Walker (2011) former mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg stated in a speech that he had his own army referring to the NYPD. Studying the stop-and-frisk policy it is apparent that the NYPD war has been against drug distribution. However, in the process they have alienated the African-American and Latino American communities.

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The CDP does not have the capabilities the NYPD has. According the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the CDP has 1,709 employees to protect 393,781 citizens divided into five precincts. According to the City of Cleveland budget book (2013) the department has a \$168 million budget. They also have multiple special operations units such as, S.W.A.T., aviation and multiple detective bureaus. After a slew of complaints and improper use of force the Cleveland Safety Director Michael McGrath told Cleveland city council that the department will receive a “tremendous amount of training” before they host the Republican National Convention June 2016 (Atassi, 2015 para. 1). Unlike the NYPD and FPD, the CDP did not alienate a race, they have frightened most of the city with the tactics they used. As stated earlier, the CDP has committed over 600 excessive force violations. One of these cases involved officers attacking the mentally ill (Department of Justice, 2015). This led to the DOJ to investigate how and why the CDP functions the way it does.

Although the FPD maybe small in size it may have the biggest issues of discrimination toward the citizens they protect. The FPD has only 72 employees and according to the City of Ferguson budget book the department has a \$5.2 million budget (2013). Of the 72 employees only 54 are uniformed officers, who protect 21,203 citizens. Unlike the NYPD and CDP they do not have multiple units, instead they have criminal investigation detectives, bicycle patrol and a traffic unit. At the time of Brown’s death the department had only three African-American officers compared to 50 Caucasian officers (Firozi, 2014). The police department did not reflect its community because 67 percent of Ferguson’s population is African-American while only 29 percent is Caucasian. Matt Apuzzo (2015) states, African-Americans accounted for 93 percent of arrests in Ferguson. Most laws that are broken are due to jaywalking or traffic stops. Apuzzo also stated that force was used 88 percent of the time on African Americans from 2012-2014.

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It is apparent that even with the tools of training and an adequate budget, that police officers' ability to follow proper protocol would not be simple. Even though these three departments were of widely divergent sizes they all need to follow one goal: to protect and serve every citizen from wrongdoing. However, this is not the goal or image that they displayed to the residents they served. Instead they were viewed as a power hungry gang that was bigoted to certain races.

The citizens of Cleveland and New York have had their issues with their respective Police Departments before these incidents. After all of these incidents, tension within the community, as well as the United States have flared leading to emotional protests, riots and distrust toward police enforcement with communities, especially in the African American neighborhoods. Moreover, there are numerous questions that surround these three cases, but there are only four that this paper focuses upon. These questions demand attention because they are guide as to why these department used similar and different strategies of image repair and crisis communication:

The first, what resources do the New York, Cleveland and Ferguson police departments have?

Second, how were the New York, Ferguson and Cleveland police department cases similar or different?

Third did the New York, Cleveland, and Ferguson police department use any methods of image restoration, crisis communication theory or both in response to the incidents and were they effective or ineffective?

Lastly, did the Cleveland, Ferguson and New York police departments use any bigoted or racist language when they tried to repair their image?

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However, before these four questions are answered it is important to understand what image restoration and crisis communication theory are, how they are used, and when it should be applied in public relations.

Chapter Two: What is Image Restoration?

Before discussing the cases, it is important to define what image restoration and crisis communication theories are. Benoit (1995) defined image restoration theory as strategies used to restore the diminished reputation of a company or person. He develops this theory using other philosophers' worldviews about how a person attempts to retain a positive image. Robert Abelson, Lawrence Rosenfield, B.L. Ware, Will Linkugel, and Kenneth Burke were the foundation of Benoit's theory. Benoit established his concept from the apologia theory, which the five other theorists formed. In the terms of image restoration, an apologist is a person who is accused and seeks to defend or excuse him or herself (Ihlen, 2002). In his book, Benoit (1995) explains what people of power do when negative things happen. He stated that they either apologize, make excuses or attempt to restore their image. This goes along with his five strategies. They are denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action and mortification.

Instead of using a step by step procedure in repairing its image, public relations representatives may choose certain options. However, before those options become available there are two assumptions that are made. Benoit (1995) states that communication is best thought of as a goal-directed activity, and maintaining a positive reputation is one of the central goals. In other words, in order to maintain a healthy image, a person or business attempts to make themselves compatible with the public. All of these may not happen in every situation. Holtzhausen and Roberts (2010), state, "Image repair strategies are seldom used in isolation. When a communicative entity uses a combination of bolstering, shifting blame and corrective action it uses separation as an image repair strategy. With separation the aim is isolation from

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crisis responsibility and blaming to a small group from within” (p. 7). In addition to the Holtzhausen and Roberts claim, the steps of image restoration do not follow any order and may be executed in multiple ways (Benoit, 1995).

Understanding Denial

In Benoit’s image restoration theory, the first option that may be taken is denial. There are a couple of ways denial can be defined. Abelson states the definition denial is “a direct attack upon one or both of the cognitive elements or the relation between them” (as cited in Jackson, 2008, p. 23). While Jackson gives an in-depth take on what denial is, Benoit (2012) simply states that denial is when someone who is accused of an act says they did not commit the offense. Denial happens quite a bit in society. It can be a statement such as “I did not steal from the grocery store,” but proof shows otherwise. Benoit (2007) uses the example of former President Bill Clinton using the statement “I did not have sex with that woman” (p. 117) although he admitted later to the affair. Benoit uses this statement to explain how simple denial works. Blosenhauer (2011) agrees with Benoit’s claim stating that the “accused denies that the offensive actually occurred or denies he or she performed it” (p. 8). However, Benoit adds shifting blame as a second layer to denial.

Unlike making a statement that omits any involvement of the accused, shifting blame states that another party committed the offense. This is stating that someone else made the accused person commit the offense. An example is former President George W. Bush stating that Congress made him raise taxes (Benoit, 2007). Whether a person simply denies any involvement or states someone else forced them to commit an act, denial is a common strategy in image restoration.

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The steps of evading responsibility

The second strategy is evading responsibility. These are separated into four explanations which are scapegoating, defeasibility, making an excuse based on accidents, and suggesting the action was justified based on motives or intentions (Benoit, 1995). The first version of evading responsibility is scapegoating, or in other words stating that a wrongful action was committed in response to another wrong action. Benoit (1995) views scapegoating as a response to a person's behavior or actions. Milford (2014) uses an example of how scapegoating works through the media. Milford studied the Miami Hurricanes football scandal which involved booster Nevin Shapiro and the NCAA use of a witness in 2011. Milford (2014) states:

On one hand, actions, or in the NCAA's case inaction, which violate the community's values must be addressed, and scapegoating has proven to be an apt tool for dealing with such issues. On the other hand, the victim in this particular case is of significance stature in the community such that its removal through scapegoating would threaten the structural integrity of the community (p. 47).

The victim in the case was the University of Miami football team. Scapegoating proved to be ineffective in this incident because instead of the NCAA using Shapiro against the program, their illegal use of witnesses further tarnished its own image in the public eye (Milford, 2014).

Another example of scapegoating occurred in April 2001 during the Cincinnati Riots. This was in response to Cincinnati police patrolman Stephen Roach killing Timothy Thomas, an African American male. According to a report, at 2:20 a.m. Thomas was being pursued by officers down an alley when Roach became startled and shot Thomas after he thought he was reaching for a gun (Vela, 2001). Thomas had committed 14 nonviolent misdemeanors.

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According to the Cincinnati police investigation, they found that Thomas was pulling up his pants (Gallagher & Lippard, 2014). After Thomas's death, the Over the Rhine district of the city rioted, destroying businesses and communities. Indirectly, the citizens used Thomas as a scapegoat to voice their frustration with how the police patrolled their community. In a report conducted by the Cincinnati Enquirer (2001) \$3.6 million worth of damages was done to businesses and they also lost \$10 million in revenue. Two million dollars of damage was also done to emergency equipment.

Defeasibility

The second approach for evading responsibility is defeasibility. Benoit (1995) defines defeasibility as a business or a person being misinformed or not having information about essential elements of a situation. Sometimes people can forget factors that can either be serious or minimal. Benoit describes defeasibility as an "organization [that] lack[s] the ability or the information to avert the crisis" (p. 28). Benoit (2007) uses a President George W. Bush appearance on Meet the Press in 2004 as an example of defeasibility. During the interview, Bush made statements such as "Hussein may have hidden WMDs," and that "he inherited a bad economy" which led to Benoit's conclusion that "His denials were ineffectual and, although circumstances might have been beyond his control (defeasibility), it was a mistake for the president to make this argument" (p. 65).

Make an excuse about event

The third variable for evading responsibility is to make an excuse about an event. Benoit (1995) refers to this as someone who will make an excuse for factors beyond their control. In Benoit's (1995) book he quotes Marvin B. Scott and Stanford M. Lyman as stating "Excuses are

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in accounts in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong or inappropriate but denies full responsibility” (p. 33). In other words, a person attempts to justify their actions.

The third option draws parallels with denial because while a person or business may say the act was inappropriate they will also try to deny any wrongdoing. Benoit uses the example of minors’ inability to control their urges compared to adults. This example by Benoit proves correct because when minors act out, society places the blame for the urges that minors feel on the individual.

Action was justified based on motives or intentions

The fourth approach to evading responsibility suggests the action was justified based on motives or intentions. Benoit (1995) developed this theory based on work by Scott, Lyman, and Goffman. Benoit, along with these three individuals, says factors from beyond an individual’s control also may be a factor. C.W. Mills agrees with Benoit’s position. Mills (1940) states, “When an agent vocalizes or imputes motive, he is not trying to describe his experienced social action. He is not merely stating ‘reasons.’ He is influencing others-and himself. Often he is finding new ‘reasons’ which will mediate action” (p. 909). An example of this is someone who says he robbed a store in order to pay for next month’s rent. Benoit (1995) adds to Mills suggesting that motives are used to justify the behavior of an individual. Although evading responsibility has plenty of options that may be useful when defusing a situation, it can also damage credibility if done incorrectly. Even if the person has made a good case that their claims are justifiable, the public and media will still have a judgment to render about whether it is positive or negative.

Reducing Offensiveness

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In addition to denial and evading responsibility, a third strategy is reducing offensiveness. Cowden and Sellnow (2002) claim there are six options within this strategy, which are, bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking accuser, and compensation. Reducing offensiveness means that a business or person downplays an act they committed to reduce the negative feedback they receive. It is also used to reduce the negative feeling by an audience (Benoit, 1995).

Bolstering

Bolstering is the first explanation in reducing offensiveness. In image repair theory, bolstering is used to mitigate negative effects by strengthening the audience's positive idea of the accused (Benoit, 1995). In most cases this may be the first step a public relations representative takes when a crisis arises. Coombs (2006) states "The goal of bolstering is to frame the organization and its connection with its stakeholders in a positive light" (as cited in Crandall & John, 2010, p. 158). This statement holds weight because this is seen in past instances. Benoit and Hanczor (1994) examined bolstering in Tonya Harding's Eye-to-Eye with Connie Chung interview in 1994. Harding was accused of injuring her rival and teammate Nancy Kerrigan before the 1994 Winter Olympics (Stewart, 2008). During the interview Harding used bolstering by "portray[ing] herself as a timid, obedient wife who lived in the shadow of an abusive husband" (Stewart, 2008, p. 43).

Minimization

Minimization is another component of reducing offensiveness. According to Benoit (1995), minimization attempts to convince the audience that the act in question is less serious than it appears. Benoit also states that this method cannot be expected to reform an image. The example he gave was involved the Exxon oil company. In 1989, Exxon spilled 11 million gallons

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of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. Its response to the crisis was to reduce seriousness of the spill to the public, which created backlash among the Alaskans and other Americans along the west coast. Benoit (1995) states "Exxon tried to minimize reports of damage to the environment itself, and attempted to bolster the company's image announcing it had 'moved swiftly and competently' to lessen the impact of the oil on the environment and wildlife" (as cited in Cox, 2013, p. 297).

Olympic swimmer gold medalist Michael Phelps draws a similar comparison to Exxon when a controversial photograph of him surfaced the internet in 2009. Phelps was photographed inhaling from a marijuana pipe at a party at the University of South Carolina (Macur, 2009). In a study of how Phelps' sponsors attempted to help Phelps restore his image it was found that some of Phelps sponsors used minimization strategies (Walsh & McAllister-Spooner, 2011). Omega, which is a watch manufacturer, released a statement two days after the incident: "The current story in the press involves Michael Phelps' private life and is, as far as Omega is concerned, a nonissue" (Walsh & McAllister-Spooner, 2011 p. 3). By Omega stating that the issue involved Phelps' "private life" means that it does not hurt their company by him choosing to smoking marijuana, and that he has the decision to do what he pleases in his free time.

Differentiation

While public figures attempt to reshape through minimization, another approach is through differentiation. This is done when an act is distinguished from other more offensive acts to lessen the audience's negative feelings by way of comparison. Ware and Linkugel (1973) describe differentiation, along with transcendence, as transformative in the way the speaker tries to change the situation. Joseph Blaney, Lance Lippert and Scott Smith (2012) explain how differentiation is used. The three writers analyzed former New York Giants wide receiver

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Plaxico Burrell and the gun charges he faced. Burrell distinguished himself as a person carrying a firearm for protection rather than a criminal looking to commit a crime. “By describing an act he didn’t commit, Burrell is clearly trying to make the act he did commit less harmful and abhorrent” (Blaney, Lippert & Smith, 2012, p. 194). Although Burrell did not harm anyone when his gun inadvertently went off and shot him in the groin, differentiation was unsuccessful in this instance because he was carrying an illegal firearm.

Transcendence

Transcendence is similar to differentiation; the difference between the concepts is that transcendence connects the accused’s actions with a greater meaning (Benoit, 1995). This is also called a different frame of reference, or keeping things in perspective. In the media, it can be easy to look at other’s flaws when they are underwater. When transcendence tactics are used it is too focus not on the act, but on the positive that has come from taking a negative action. Jackson (2008) refers to Benoit’s example of Robin Hood, who steals and order to give to others. In a normal context stealing is perceived as wrong. However, Robin Hood is justified from any wrongdoing because he is giving the stolen products from the rich to the poor and downtrodden (Jackson, 2008).

Attacking an accuser

A fifth option to reduce offensiveness is attacking an accuser. Benoit (1995) describes this “as an attempt to create new beliefs about the accused to undermine the attack” (p. 29). King (2002) states that Coombs defines attacking an accuser as “directed towards a person(s) that may threaten the interest of the organization” (p. 134). This is the tactic Terrelle Pryor used when he was accused of earning thousands of dollars for signing memorabilia (Farrey, 2011). After the accusations, Pryor made these statements to the media:

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The reason why I did it was to pay my mother's gas bill and some of her rent. I was telling the NCAA, "Please, anything that you can do. I gave my mother this so my sister wouldn't be cold, so my mother wouldn't be cold." They didn't have any sympathy for me. I don't think I deserved [being punished] in that way because of the reason I was doing it. I felt like I was doing God's work in a way, and I was getting driven into the ground (Selzer, 2013, p. 25).

While there is transcendence in his statement (he was breaking the rules of the NCAA for a better cause – to help his family), Pryor also attacked the NCAA. Selzer states "He portrays the NCAA as a callous, tyrannical organization that was punishing him for trying to be a supportive son and brother" (p. 25).

Compensation

The last approach to reduce offensiveness is through compensation. Benoit (1995) describes compensation as the accused offering to forgive them the victim of their actions. However, a study done by Rachel Knoespel (2012) states that compensation seems the effective way to sway an audience's mind when a company or person's name is in hot water. When Tiger Woods admitted to infidelity in his marriage his wife was given \$100 million during the divorce process. Knoespel (2012) states that compensation is not only money, but goods and services. Toyota focused on the potential danger of a sticking accelerator to mitigate a customer's negative feelings (Knoespel, 2012). This is an example of compensation because it showed customers that a company will focus on pleasing the customer during a time of anguish. The approach was successful and most of the time it is successful in restoring the image of a person. Unlike reducing offensiveness, corrective action has only one strategy and it can be effective.

Corrective Action

Corrective action is a fourth strategy of image restoration. While the other three seem to cover up the acts of the person or business, this is the first step that claims responsibility.

Corrective action is admitting there is a problem, and taking precise action to correct the issue.

Margaret Moran (2012) states that corrective action has two options which are “restoring the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable action or promising to mend one’s ways and make changes to prevent the recurrence of the undesirable act” (p. 45). It is difficult to restore how things were before the questionable action occurred. An example is when the British Petroleum (BP) company used corrective action during the 2010 oil spill. According to Katherine Rogers (2012), the corrective action method was used 42 percent of the time during the spill. In a commercial CEO of BP Tony Haywood stated “We know it is our responsibility to keep you informed and do everything we can so that this never happens again,” (Richardson & Hinton 2015, p. 180). In order to regain respect and stature in the public sphere, admitting that there is a problem and taking the steps to not repeat the same issues is a positive way to restore an image.

Mortification

Mortification is the last strategy in Benoit restoration theory. Benoit adopted this strategy from Burke. Rise Samra states Burke considers that society uses two forms of purification; victimage which is developed in Burke’s dramatism pentad as guilt using a scapegoat, the second form is mortification (Kim, 1996). According to Burke, mortification involves personal sacrifice by the guilty (as cited in Kim, 1996). Benoit (1995) draws similarities with his definition in the parameters of image restoration as the accused admits responsibility and asks for forgiveness. Coombs (2006) states that mortification and corrective action are the most common

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recommendations when dealing with a crisis. Virginia Jones (2012) quotes “Benoit argues that mortification includes ‘an apparently sincere apology, expression of regret, or request for forgiveness’” (p. 56). Although apologizing should be the easiest option:

“No one likes to admit that they made a mistake. We have an ingrained reticence to do so, a near-primal response that little kids learn probably before they can speak.

Nowadays, the public has become judgmental that harsh treatment comes to those that admit their omissions, learn from them and move forward” (Bump, 2014, para. 1).

Although it is viewed as a correct action to admit mistakes and take the measures to not repeat the same faults, it is not always successful, but moral strategy.

Crisis Communication

While image repair theory helps us understand when public figures and businesses attempt to restore its image, it is important to explain how they respond to a crisis immediately after it occurs. During every situation involving a negative action, a business or individual will attempt to respond swiftly. This is known as crisis communication. Although crisis communication and image repair possess similarities, they are used for different reasons.

According to the Climbing Wall Association (2012) crisis communication “is designed to protect and defend an individual, company, or organization that’s facing a public challenge to its reputation” (p. 1). Coombs (1999) defines crisis communication as something that “details a strategic plan and procedure for recovery for an organization that has suffered a negative impact as a result of a crisis and helps the organization control the damaging situation” (as cited in Mukherjee, 2014, p. 177). While these definitions outline what crisis communication is it does not highlight how quickly organizations and people respond to their crisis. According to Coombs

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(2007), there is a three-stage model in order for a business, person and those affected overcome a crisis—pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis.

Coombs (2007) states that pre-crisis involves prevention and preparation. Eli Avraham and Eran Ketter (2012) claim that during this step a person or business should create a positive and supportive environment in order to reduce the damage that can occur if a crisis arises. During this stage it is also important to create a crisis management plan and team. Coombs (2007) also states that the team should test the plan.

The second part of Coombs' theory is crisis response, which explains what public figures and businesses do and say after a crisis occurs. This step coincides with Benoit's image restoration theory because during this step, image repair methods can be used. This method is separated into two sections; the initial crisis response and reputation repair and behavioral intentions (Coombs, 2007).

Coombs (2007) breaks down initial responses into three points: be quick, be accurate, and be consistent. During or after any crisis it is difficult to have the wherewithal to cope with the magnitude of the situation. The public wants to know what happened and how it happened immediately after a crisis occurs. In order to have good communication during a crisis, adjusting information is vital (McCarthy & Hatcher, 2002). Although giving a brief record of events is useful, the details given must be accurate. Coombs (2007) created an example of eating contaminated food. If the public receives a slow and inaccurate response about the food than there is an increased risk of possible deaths and injuries.

The second part to crisis response is reputation repair and behavioral intentions. Coombs' (2007) method of reputation repair is similar to Benoit's image restoration theory. "Coombs integrated the work of Benoit with other to create a mast list that integrated various writings into

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one list” (Coombs, p. 7). Some of the strategies are similar to Benoit’s for example, Coombs (2007) “accidental” tactic is similar into Benoit’s “evading responsibility” and “making an excuse based on accidents” (p. 7). Another example is Coombs (2007) “reminder” strategies stems off of “reducing offensiveness” and “bolstering” (p. 7).

Attribution theory is another layer to reputation repair strategies, which tries to explain how people link actions and emotions to causes that are internal and external. Coombs (2007) claims that attributions create emotions which affect how people interact with those who of involved in an event.

Attribution theory is broken into three reactions: increased damage to an organization’s reputation, reduced purchase intentions and increased likelihood of engaging in negative word-of-mouth (Coombs, 2006). An example that experienced all three reactions was Abercrombie & Fitch. According to the Schuyler Velasco (2014), A&F received backlash for targeting a narrow demographic when CEO Mike Jeffries refused to lower prices or give sales in a 10-month span during the 2008 recession. Jeffries also refused to sell clothing to targets such as the “old” and “plus-sized,” (Velasco, 2013). This was after A&F was sued of race and sex discrimination against African, Hispanics, and Asian Americans (Greenhouse, 2004). Because of their high sales, customers were less inclined to buy A&F clothing, which caused a double digit sales decline and 150 store closures that next year. In a 2006 interview with Salon, Jeffries stated “A lot of people don’t belong [in our clothes] and they can’t belong. Are we exclusionary? Absolutely,” (Lewis, 2006). Seven years later, Amy Taylor (2013) expressed her concerns with the company’s target in an open letter to A&F. Because of the negative backlash, Jeffries started to discount within their stores and selling to other targets in 2014 (Berfield & Rupp, 2015).

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Coombs' (2007) final method of his model is post-crisis, which seeks efficient ways to prepare for the next crisis. During this stage, the crisis is no longer the person's or business main attention. But Coombs states that it is critical that crisis managers deliver on the promises given when they repair its image or risk losing the public trust. An example Coombs gives is if a person or business promises additional information about the crisis to the public, they must deliver on their guarantee. Also, a person or business should approach their crisis as a learning experience. Coombs states "The organization should seek ways to improve prevention, preparation, and/or response. ... That is how management learns and improves its crisis management process," (p. 10). In other words, Coombs means that in order to avoid the same mistakes, a person or company must analyze how and why a crisis happens.

Sometimes during or after a crisis, it is hard for an organization or person to rekindle the positive image they once had. However, if certain methods and procedures are taken, a person's image may be restored. Relating this to the law enforcement incidents in Ferguson, Cleveland, and New York City, departments took different measures in an attempt to improve their image within their communities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The question of police bigotry is a hot topic. This has led to the public's quick judgment and inability to forgive. Two of three cases ended with a grand jury ruling in the officer's favor. Because of the public's negative reaction toward the officer's actions, it is necessary to study how the NYPD, FPD, and CDP positively or negatively in an attempt to its image. Another factor to analyze from these three departments is how they responded to the crisis.

The New York Times, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and Cleveland.com are the newspapers that covered each case locally.. By analyzing the local print news coverage, we will attempt to determine if the NYPD, FPD, and CDP were successful in rehabilitating their image. For the Garner case, analyzing the New York Times articles from July 17 to December 3, 2014 is important because this time frame covers Garner's encounter, and the grand jury decision not to indict officer Daniel Pantaleo. In between these two dates the New York Times released articles with background information about Garner and Pantaleo. They also wrote about how the NYPD disciplined their officers and emergency personnel who arrived at the scene.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch articles from August 10 to March date, year tell the story of the Brown case. Although a grand jury decided not to indict Wilson in November of 2014, the U.S. DOJ conducted their own investigation that closed March 4, 2015. In between the seven months the DOJ also investigated the Ferguson Police Department's racist emails, and how these messages do not reflect the community they protect. Mann (2015) stated that the DOJ found "direct evidence of racial bias" (para. 1) from the police department and the court. An e-mail in March 2010 ridiculed African Americans' speech and familiar situations. "I be so glad that dis be my last child support payment! Month after month, year after year, all dose payments" (para. 6) Another email compared President Barak Obama to a chimpanzee.

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Two days before the grand jury decided not to indict Wilson in the Brown case, Rice was shot and killed by two police officers, Timothy Loehmann and Frank Garmback, in a Cleveland park. Before this case, the DOJ stepped in to retrain the police officers of the Cleveland Police Department. This case was resolved in late December with a grand jury deciding not to indict Loehmann and Garmback.

Before analyzing each case, there are potential factors that many speculate fueled these events that need to be debunked. One of those factors is that the suspects were targeted because of the color of their skin. Another potential cause is the belief that NYPD, FPD, and CDP are racist or bigoted against African Americans. No matter what plays a role in these cases more and more cases of unarmed African Americans being killed by police officers continue to happen in the U.S.

In order to find out if these police departments were successful in rehabilitating their reputation, four questions have to be answered:

1. What resources do the New York, Cleveland and Ferguson police departments have?
2. How were the New York, Cleveland and Ferguson police departments cases similar or different?
3. Did the New York, Cleveland and Ferguson police departments use any bigoted or racist language when they tried to repair its image?
4. Did the New York, Cleveland and Ferguson police departments use any methods of image restoration and crisis communication theory or both, and were they effective or ineffective?

In order for the fourth question to be answered, the three questions before it need to be analyzed. There is more to each police department than its personnel and budgeting. It is

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important to research the police department's relationship with its respective community before and after the events occurred. The media plays a critical role in covering the reaction after positive or negative events. While television news telecasts give quality information, they tend to be biased or give different views of most situations. Using the newspapers from each city is productive because they give a non-biased take of the situations and add details and to every story.

A qualitative study is a suitable approach when looking at these cases using image restoration theory because there is a small sample size. Although there are a growing number of similar cases springing up across the U.S., many of them do not have sufficient evidence as to what happened and why the police officers conducted themselves as they did. The cases that make up this paper are the foundational cases in considering the relationship between police officers and the citizens they are supposed to protect and serve. Lastly, the public's satisfactory assessment of each police department can be measured through newspaper articles after the events. Newspapers give the readers a detailed account about the story and background information about the people involved in the article (Carroll, 2010).

In these cases, each department used different strategies of image restoration and crisis communication to reclaim a more positive image in their own communities.

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Chapter Four: I can't breathe: Eric Garner's fatal encounter

Although there are other cases involving a police department's attempt to restore their image after a negative act, it is essential to study the case of Eric Garner because it was the first case in 2014 to receive major attention. After Garner there have been five incidents similar to this case, which raises questions the conduct and intent of police officers.

The New York Times is a relevant resource because it will give the most current and accurate information about what happened during the incident and who was involved.

Also studying the New York Times articles from July 17 to December 3 will aid in building understanding about Garner's encounter and death, and the grand jury decision not to indict officer Daniel Pantaleo. In between these two dates, the New Times released articles with background information about both Garner and Pantaleo. They also covered stories as to how the NYPD disciplined their officers and emergency personnel that arrived at the scene.

It is important to remember that the NYPD may not have used every strategy or option that Benoit explored in his theory. Also the NYPD may not have followed any order of image restoration. The "stop and frisk" policy is relevant in this case because Garner was suspected of selling illegal products. This policy is also essential in this case because it was outlawed a year earlier because of the large number of African and Hispanic Americans that were being searched.

These articles will also cover the question about whether Pantaleo used a chokehold to subdue Garner. The chokehold is noteworthy in this case because this is what led to Garner's death. In addition to that, the NYPD were forbidden to use the chokehold 20 years prior to this event. The New York Times coverage of the Garner case will shed light and understanding regarding how officers are supposed to interact with a suspect and how the NYPD attempted to restore its image.

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Garner's past catches up to him

For nearly five months the Garner case stayed at the top of news headlines. The public criticized the way the officers conducted themselves and some felt the department had not reformed itself. Since 2013, 244 people have been placed in chokeholds by the NYPD (Goldstein & Schweber, 2014). Before discussing the results, it will provide helpful context to explain the situation that led to Garner's death.

After breaking up a scuffle between two other people, Garner got involved in an altercation with plainclothes and uniformed officers. The officers questioned Garner about selling untaxed cigarettes and other products illegally on the street. Garner declined to answer and began to defend his stance and asked the officers to leave him alone. After seven minutes of arguing and resisting arrest, police officer Daniel Pantaleo placed Garner in an apparent illegal chokehold. The scuffle that happened outside of a beauty shop, and the location of Garner's actions is what attracted police to the area. Garner is an example of profiling by police, not because of race, but because of his past criminal history. As stated in chapter one, Garner had been arrested 30 times dating back to 1980. His criminal history included assault, resisting arrest, grand larceny and selling unlicensed cigarettes (O'Brien, Saul & Shallwani, 2014). According to the Inquisitor (2014), Garner was out on bail for selling illegal cigarettes, driving without a license, marijuana possession and false impersonation (Mitchell, 2014). What many may not know is that Garner had two encounters with police officers in July around the same area (Mitchell, 2014) Witnesses saw Garner resist arrest and refused to be searched. John McCrae, a witness to the first encounter was surprised officers let him go. "It was the first time I ever saw them let him go. You figure if it stops them the first time, it might get them to stop the second time" (Baker, Goodman & Mueller, 2015 para. 6)

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How the NYPD attempted to repair its image

After reviewing articles, it is clear that the NYPD used corrective action, evading responsibility (scapegoating, suggest the action was justified based on motives and intentions), reducing offensiveness (minimization), and denial when dealing with this case.

Denial

In early September, a grand jury heard the officers involved and 22 witnesses. All except Pantaleo were granted immunity (Goodman & Baker, 2014). In a Dec. 3 article in the New York Times Pantaleo made statements through his lawyer Stuart London,

He acknowledged that he heard Mr. Garner saying, "I can't breathe, I can't breathe," and insisted that he tried to disengage as quickly as he could. At the same time, Mr. Garner's ability to speak suggested that he, in fact, could breathe (Goodman & Wilson, 2014, para. 4).

In his statement, Pantaleo denies that he was choking Garner because he was talking. He also described the move as a takedown maneuver and never intended to choke Garner (Goodman & Baker, 2014). However, the first part of his statement does not fit with the video that was shot during the arrest (Goodman & Wilson, 2014, para. 9). The video shows Pantaleo holding Garner until he was unconscious, there was no signs of Pantaleo loosening his hold. The NYPD also used Garner's previous arrest to shift blame on the victim that his past fatally caught up with him. While they are right, it does not strengthen their image because the public focused on how Garner died. Although Garner did not die from the chokehold, it triggered a heart attack, which led to his death. Former New York Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik attempted to shift blame to Garner stating that a person cannot resist arrest when being detained by police officers.

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“If Eric Garner did not resist arrest, the outcome of the case would be very different. He wouldn’t be dead today. ... Regardless what the arrest was for. The officers don’t have the ability to say, ‘Well, this is a minor arrest, so we are going to ignore you’” (Mitchell, 2014, para. 6).

Although Kerik makes good, although callous, points, this does not negate the actions of Pantaleo. The officer in question may have used another tactic to detain Garner.

Evading Responsibility

The NYPD used a few options to evade responsibility as well. The two that are prevalent in this case are scapegoating and suggesting the action was justified based on motives and intentions. On August 1, 2014, the president of the Patrolman’s Benevolent Association, Patrick J. Lynch, said “[If]Mr. Garner not resisted the lawful order of police officers placing him under arrest, this tragedy would not have occurred” (Goldstein & Santora, 2014, para. 7). Lynch’s statement draws parallels with actions justified based on motives and intentions because he is inferring that Pantaleo had no other choice, but to subdue Garner because he resisted arrest.

Ramsey Orta witnessed and filmed the altercation between Garner and police officers. It is clear in Orta’s video that Garner had enough of officers arresting him. Garner pleaded his innocence with the police stating that he did nothing wrong. During his plea, Garner said “This ends today” (Southall & Santora, 2014, para. 4) There are plenty assumptions to be made about these three words. One is Pantaleo along with the other officers may have thought that Garner is not being placed under arrest without a fight. Another assumption is that Garner grew tired of being arrested and wanted to be left alone. At any rate, the result ended fatally. Garner lost his life. The question of Garner’s innocence still looms today because it is unclear if he did anything

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illegal. In a July 18 article of the New York Times Goldstein and Schweber (2014) state that Garner was accused of selling untaxed loose cigarettes, but it was never proven.

Scapegoating was another tactic the NYPD used. At the scene as described before Garner resisted arrest, Pantaleo stated that he would not have had to use the chokehold if Garner followed orders to a search (Goodman & Baker, 14). This is a scapegoating tactic because Pantaleo justified his actions because of the suspect's actions. Though it is true that Garner resisted arrest the hold that was placed on him should have either been released or loosened so the arrest could be made.

Reducing Offensiveness

In the July 18 issue of the New York Times Joseph Goldstein and Nate Schweber (2014) covered the initial aftermath and reaction of Garner's death. At city hall, NYPD Police Commissioner William Bratton said that he believed officers using chokeholds is not a widespread problem. He also said that this was his first exposure to this situation in 20 years. (Goldstein & Schweber, 2014).

The use of minimization was a negative, especially a day after Garner's death, because the community was still recovering from the tragedy. Also Bratton did not take into account that there have been cases involving officers using chokeholds since 2013. Chokeholds were used 4.4 percent of the time in excessive-force complaints (Goldstein & Schweber, 2014). Although Bratton is correct that it was not a citywide problem, making that a defense did not help the NYPD's case.

Differentiation was also used during the altercation because Pantaleo felt like he was doing the right thing by taking Garner down. Because Garner was allegedly accused of selling illegal untaxed goods and did not comply with police, officers felt that their actions were

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justified because they suspected Garner was doing something illegal. As stated earlier, differentiation is when an act is distinguished from other more offensive acts to reduce the audience's negative feelings toward the act that was committed. When information was released that Garner was confronted for selling illegal products and that he had been arrested over 30 times, this was supposed to reduce the negative feelings of the public toward Pantaleo and the other officers. However, this tactic was ineffective because the NYPD already had a reputation under the "stop and frisk" policy for conducting searches of people they suspected of taking part in illegal activities. The implication was that the illegal chokehold used to take down Garner was not as bad as the actions of Garner.

Furious and distraught over Garner's death, his family sought a wrongful death lawsuit against the city of New York, the police department, and officers for the amount of \$75 million, after rejecting a \$5 million offer from the city (Pengelly, 2015). Finally, in an attempt to compensate the family for their loss, the city granted Garner's family with \$5.9 million settlement. (Pengelly, 2015). Garner's death was ruled a homicide by the city examiner and that more responsibility should be placed on the NYPD for the events that happened that day. Although compensating the victims' family was a step in the right direction it never resolved the situation. In this case, the city is making amends for the loss of Garner but they also said his death should not have happened.

Corrective Action

The day after the initial incident (July 18, 2014), Bratton said "As defined in the department's patrol guide, this would appear to have been a chokehold ... this includes any pressure to the throat or windpipe, which may prevent or hinder breathing or reduce intake of air" (as cited in Goldstein & Schweber, 2014, para. 3-4). Bratton also temporarily relieved

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Pantaleo and Justin Damico, the first two officers on the scene, which is a sign of corrective action. The problem with this is that Bratton relieved them of duty from field work and restricted them to desk duty (Newman, 2014). The two officers were not suspended with or without pay. In addition to this assessment, the emergency personnel who arrived on the scene and failed to give Garner CPR were suspended from duty (Newman, 2014). At this moment however, the two officers' names were not released to the public. The next week, Bratton reached out to Garner's family and promised to retrain every officer about how chokeholds should and should not be used (The New York Times, 2014). On September 4, 2014 the NYPD began to use body cameras to record every interaction between officers and suspects. As the leader of the NYPD, Bratton did not side with his officer, instead he attacked the incident head-on and admitted to improper training and faults among his officers.

From the day after Garner's death until the day the grand jury decided to not to indict Pantaleo, the NYPD used several methods and strategies to restore its image. Although Bratton attempted to ensure New York City citizens that officers would be retrained and more cameras will be used to view police conduct, the community was still wary that little or nothing would ultimately change.

Although corrective action was taken by Bratton, it is unclear that mortification was experienced and communicated by Pantaleo. After the case was over Pantaleo said he felt "very bad about the death of Mr. Garner" but there was not a single apology made by him to the Garner family (Goodman & Baker, 2014, para 6). It can be debated that Bratton, along with the mayor, used mortification, yet in this it has to come from the individual who committed the act in order for the strategy to work. If Pantaleo showed remorse in court and through his comments, then it may have changed the community's opinion.

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Another reason is that four months after Garner's death, another unarmed African American was killed in a dark stairwell by police officers. Although officials called this an unfortunate event, it raised more concern about police conduct (Wilson, 2014). Ironically, the Missouri grand jury's decision not to indict police officer Darren Wilson in the case of Mike Brown also affected the image of the NYPD. After Brown's case closed, protest began in New York as well as in other parts of the United States. This plays a crucial role in Garner's case because it was similar to Brown's.

Two weeks after the grand jury decided not to indict Pantaleo, two police officers were murdered in revenge for the deaths of Garner and Brown. The murder of these two officers symbolizes a city that is attempting to decide if its safety officers are friend or foe. While some of the public mourned the death of the officers, some of the Brooklyn residents cheered and clapped. M.L. Netsel (2014) recorded public reactions "Some were saying, 'They deserved it,' and another was shouting at the cops 'Serves them right because you mistreat people!'" (para. 6)

Hands up, Don't shoot? Wilson's plea for forgiveness

Brown's altercation with Wilson occurred August 9, 2014. At 11:47 a.m., Wilson responded to an infant who was having trouble breathing. Freivogel (2014) reported that approximately six minutes later, Wilson responded to a theft in progress at a convenience store. According to Jones (2014), Brown and his friend Dorian Johnson stole a \$48 box of Swisher Sweets Cigars. Surveillance video in the store showed Brown strong arm the store clerk as he exited the store. When Wilson arrived on the scene he saw Brown and Johnson walking in the middle of the street. In an interview with George Stephanopoulos (2014), Wilson asked Brown and Johnson to walk on the sidewalk. However, the two men refused. Wilson also stated that he only spoke with Johnson and did not address any comments to Brown before he spoke. After

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their exchange, Wilson realized the two boys matched the description of the robbery from the dispatch he called for another car and confronted Brown and Johnson.

The events after this moment begin to vary. Wilson stated that Brown attacked him while Johnson said that there was an exchange of words before Wilson drew his weapon and the two men ran. Witnesses stories varied. Some supported Wilson, others stated that Brown surrendered and Wilson fired upon the defenseless man. The decision whether to indict Wilson went to a grand jury. McClam (2014) reported that the jury decided not to indict Wilson of wrongfully murdering Brown Nov. 24, 2014, three months after their altercation. The St. Louis county prosecutor Bob McCullough stated “the grand jury investigation found that some witness statements were completely refuted by the physical evidence” (McClam 2014, para. 13). (McCullough made other comments about what made the case challenging within the first 24-hours, which will be discussed later).

Six months later, the DOJ reported on what they found in the death of Brown. The DOJ (2015) not only found in favor of Wilson, but they found information which proved witness accounts to be inaccurate or fallacious:

As detailed throughout this report, some of those accounts are inaccurate because they are inconsistent with the forensic evidence; some of those accounts are materially inconsistent with that witness’s own prior statements with no explanation, credible for otherwise, as to why those changed over time. Certain other witnesses who originally stated Brown had his hands up in surrender recanted their original accounts, admitting that they did not witness the shooting parts of it, despite what they initially reported either to federal or local law enforcement or to the media. Prosecutors did not rely on those

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accounts when making a prosecutive decision. (DOJ Report on Shooting of Michael Brown, 2015, p. 7).

The DOJ (2015) also found that Brown made movements toward Wilson after the initial confrontation in the car. Ballistic evidence from where Wilson took his first shot to when Brown fell to his death, along with credible witness accounts are consistent with Wilson's story as well. Ballistic and bloodstain evidence from the road proved that Brown ran 180 feet away from the SUV after Wilson shot him the first time and fell to his death 21.6 feet away from Wilson. The same evidence showed that Wilson fired 12 shots, two from his SUV and 10 (three volleys) on the street and that he paused between each shot. Brown's autopsy showed that he was shot six to eight times, none of the bullets entered Brown's back, which eliminates the theory that Brown was shot in the back. Additionally, all witnesses stated that Brown made movements toward Wilson after running away from the SUV. Witnesses stated Brown had his hand up and briefly described Brown dropping his hands and charging Wilson. It is unknown why Brown decided to turn around to charge Wilson, it is unknown if more words were exchanged. Wilson stated that he pursued Brown and Johnson on foot to keep visual contact with the suspects.

What Brown's death uncovered

Image restoration and the public's judgment of the police is vital because without response from the public, no change from the police departments would have taken place. Nearly a year after the death of Brown, the Ferguson police department made a transition in leadership. Wilborn Nobles (2015) reported that Ferguson hired a new interim police chief, Andre Anderson, in July. The hire was positioned as the start of a change that "will build trust between

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police and city residents by incorporating community policing and to shape a police department that will reflect the demographic of Ferguson” (Nobles, 2015, para. 2).

Other police departments in Missouri, especially St. Louis, had faced scrutiny from the public before. This was fueled by the court taking advantage citizen who repeatedly broken minor violation in order to make them pay multiple fines. Brown’s death also revealed a new detail behind Ferguson’s focus to swiftly detain its citizens. The DOJ found that Ferguson police officials discriminated against its citizens. Ferguson is 67 percent African American, however, 92 percent of arrests made by Ferguson police officers were of African Americans (Andrews, Desantis, & Keller, 2015). Many of these arrests were for petty offenses in order for the police and court officials to meet their arrest targets. According to the DOJ (2015), “In 2013 alone, the court issued 9,000 warrants on cases stemming in large part from minor violations such as parking infractions, traffic tickets, or house code violations” (p. 3). In August 2013, a city council-member commented that there is a lack of community service options for citizens. He said “Keep those people that simply don’t have the money to pay their fines constantly being arrested and going to jail, only to be released and do it all over again” (p. 4). An example that the DOJ used stemmed from a 2007 case of an African American woman. According to Jeremy Diamond (2015) a woman experienced financial difficulties including homelessness between 2007-2010. On a single occasion, she received two parking citations that cost a total of \$151. In a seven-year period (2007-2014) the woman went to jail twice for the same parking citations. During that time, she attempted to pay the fees, but the courts refused her money (Diamond, 2015). By December 2014, the woman still owed \$541 in fees after paying \$550. Andrews, Desantis & Keller (2015) also found that the percentage of general funds revenue from fines and

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forfeitures increased 11 percent between 2010-2014. These factors created a hostile society that Brown's death ignited.

After the death of Brown, the city of Ferguson erupted in riots. Brown (2014) compiled the events days after Brown's death. It took nearly two weeks for peace and order to be restored in Ferguson. Multiple television broadcast and media outlets reported civilians and officers injured during the protest. However, chaos arose again when a grand jury decided not to indict Wilson on November 24, 2014. The Washington Post (2015) reported "The decision not to indict Mr. Wilson set off a wave of anger among those who had gathered outside the Ferguson Police Department" (para. 12).

Elliott McLaughlin, Sara Sidner, and Faith Karimi (2015) reported that the city of Ferguson declared a state of emergency. What began as a peaceful protest ended in civil unrest. The St. Louis County police department tweeted "Safety is our top priority, is now compromised. This is no longer a peaceful protest. Participants are now unlawfully assembled" (para. 3). St. Louis County Executive Steve Stenger stated "The recent acts of violence will not be tolerated in a community that has worked so tirelessly over the last year to rebuild and become stronger" (McLaughlin, Sidner, Karimi, 2015, para. 5). During the peaceful protest nearly 56 people were arrested including a gunman who fired at police. A year after Brown's fatal encounter with Wilson, the city of Ferguson still feels the sting of the what their police department put them through. Although the Ferguson Police Department ultimately made changes within their personnel due to a DOJ investigation, citizens of that area have been slow to forgive.

After Brown

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Before the FPD made steps to diversify, the DOJ also found racially and religiously fueled e-mails that reflected poorly on the culture of the department. Between 2008-2011, the DOJ found that the e-mails contained offensive and insensitive jokes (as cited by Lowery and Kindy, 2015). “There’s a new Muslim clothing line opening shop opened in our shopping center, but they threw me out after I asked if I could look at some of the bomber jacket” (Lowery & Kindy, 2015, para. 5). Other e-mails included offensive photos and posters that were forwarded throughout the department. Lowery and Kindy found that three Ferguson police officers and court officials were fired because of their involvement.

FPD steps of Image Restoration

Given these issues, what steps did the FPD take to restore its image? The FPD and St. Louis Police Department (SLPD) used evading responsibility, reducing responsibility, corrective tactics, and mortification during the Mike Brown case. But because of the relationship the citizens of Ferguson had with their police department, the chances of the FPD being successful at restoring their image was slim.

The FPD and SLPD immediately backed Wilson’s action before fully investigating and assessing what events took place August 9, 2014. Like any company or family, the FPD and SLPD treated the case as innocent until proven guilty and were confident that Wilson made the right decision in the altercation with Brown.

Evading Responsibility

After the crime scene investigation and hearing Wilson’s story, the FPD and SLPD were positive that Wilson was telling the truth. The St. Louis County Police Sheriff Jon Belmar said “The genesis of this was a physical confrontation” (Bosman and Fitzsimmons 2014, para. 5).

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From the initial investigation, the FPD evaded responsibility based on an accident that happened between Wilson and Brown. In a New York Times report the day after Brown's death Belmar stated that a struggle occurred "over the officer's weapon" which led to two gun shots lodged inside the police SUV (Bosman and Fitzsimmons 2014). From the outset the police departments stated that Brown scuffled with Wilson. This is a defensible tactic, which claims that Wilson lacked control over the situation with Brown. In the days to follow, Belmar added to his initial statement which claimed that Brown was shot and killed after he assaulted Wilson when the two struggled over Wilson's gun in the patrol car (Bissell, Piper, Matthews 2014). Belmar's comment suggests that Wilson's actions were justified based on the motives and intentions of Brown.

Other comments they made to evade responsibility came when the public criticized how long Brown's body laid on the street. Hunn and Bell (2014) reported that Brown died at 12:03 p.m. however, his body was not placed in the back of an emergency vehicle until 4:15 p.m., nearly four hours after he died. This led to a hostile crowd growing around Brown's body and may have delayed police initial crime investigation. Activists stated that leaving an African American body laying on the ground for the African American community to see is to show a sign of superiority as to whom is in charge. "They shot a black man and they left his body in the street to let you all know this can be you" (Hunn and Bell, 2014, para. 6). At Brown's funeral, Rev. Al Sharpton said "Like nobody cared, like his life didn't matter. Dictators leaves bodies in the street. Warlords leave bodies in the streets. Not an advanced society" (Hunn and Bell 2014, para. 3).

The public criticized the SLPD and FPD handling of Brown's body because weeks before in Staten Island, NY, Garner was transported to the hospital in under an hour. In Cleveland, Rice's body was also conveyed to the hospital in under an hour. All three of these areas are

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largely populated by minority races. However, the Ferguson public thought the FPD and SLPD were trying to make a statement by leaving Brown's body unmoved.

While the nation questioned the police tactics, medical examiners and other law enforcement officials said the time of day and the scene of the day played a part in the delay. Ferguson Police Chief Thomas Jackson stated "the scene was so chaotic that there were moments when they didn't know if they were going to get out without getting hurt or hurting someone else" (Hunn & Bell 2014, para. 45).

The true answer as to why Brown's body laid in the street for so long is because of the lack of staff and personnel on the streets during the weekend. Hunn and Bell (2014) stated that during the weekend the FPD works with a skeleton crew and they responded to an earlier incident miles away. Although paramedics and firefighters checked and covered the body within the first ten minutes, it took nearly an hour for homicide detectives to arrive to scene. According to Hunn and Bell (2014), the crowd around the crime scene grew to nearly a hundred. At 2:12 p.m. shots near the crime scene were fired as the crowd became more hostile toward emergency and police crews. During this time, Calvin Whitaker, a livery service driver who was there to deliver Brown's body, heard the crowd say "Let's kill the police" and started to throw water bottles at Whitaker's car (Hunn and Bell, 2014, para. 34). Within the hour SWAT was dispatched to the scene. The Crime Scene Unit was not able to take pictures of the scene until 3 p.m., and another hour later Brown's body was delivered to the morgue.

The last comments to analyze are from Wilson in his interview with Stephanopoulos. Wilson made various comments, evading responsibility for his actions during his altercation with Brown. Wilson claimed that when he stopped the two men he did not address Brown. Yet, he spoke with Johnson and asked them both to move from the middle of the street to the sidewalk.

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Wilson said to Stephanopoulos (2014) that after Brown was shot from their scuffle in the SUV that he pursued the two individuals on foot to maintain visual contact. After a few seconds, Wilson stated that Brown turned around and charged him leaving him no choice but to shoot the 18-year old man. Wilson told Stephanopoulos (2014), that his initial thought was that “if he (Brown) gets to me he will kill me. He has already overpowered me once, if he gets to me, I will not survive” (para. 25). Wilson used scapegoating, defeasibility, and suggested that his action was justified based on the motives and intentions in his comment to place an image as to what he experienced in the one minute and a half exchange with Brown.

Although Wilson is a trained police officer, he was in a peculiar position against Brown. First, Brown was large and strong for an 18-year-old standing 6-5 and weighing over 289 pounds. Wilson did not have a small stature at 6-1 and weighing 215 pounds, but he was out of his league compared to Brown who also had a leverage advantage, grabbing Wilson in his SUV and not allowing him to get out. When Wilson said that Brown overpowered him once before, Wilson referred to Brown swinging and connecting with a punch to the side of his face and he started to reach for Wilson’s gun when Wilson was doing the same. His famous quote repeated after the interview was that “I felt like a five-year old holding on to Hulk Hogan,” explaining how powerful and strong Brown was (James, Heath, Eisher, 2014, para. 4). Wilson also explained to Stephanopoulos that he did not use pepper spray on Brown because it would have disabled both of them since they were scuffling. Wilson also stated that he did not carry a Taser because it was too large. Wilson only had a few seconds to decide between using a non-lethal weapon or grabbing for his gun. In doing this, Wilson evaded responsibility for killing Brown. While Wilson’s actions were justified based on the intentions that Brown posed, it remains unclear about what Brown’s motive was to attack Wilson multiple times.

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Reducing offensiveness

The FPD, SLPD, and Wilson also attempted to reduce the offensiveness of Brown's death to minimize the hostility between them and Ferguson citizens. Belmar continued to defend his officers and the way they handled the events that day.

“There are absolutes in police work. Protect the crime scene. Investigate thoroughly.

What would we have gained by taking pictures of Mr. Brown's body and simply getting him out as fast as we could ... it might have moved (the timeline) up an hour and a half.”

(Hunn & Bell, 2014, para. 49)

Although this statement by Belmar was meant to minimize, it answers the question as to what prolonged law enforcement and emergency personnel. Wilson attempted to reduce offensiveness of his actions multiple times during his interview with Stephanopoulos. Wilson confronted witness accounts that stated he stood over top of Brown's and shot him multiple times. This statement attacks the accuser, who later retracted those remarks about Wilson. Toward the end of his interview with Stephanopoulos (2014), Wilson was asked if he thinks Brown would be alive today if he complied with officers. Wilson responded by saying “If he (Brown) and Johnson had gotten on the sidewalk, I probably wouldn't have even noticed the Cigarillos. I would have gone and gotten my lunch and he would have continued his day” (Stephanopoulos, 2014, para). Wilson added “Everyone has their thoughts ... I can only believe in my actions” (para. 100) These remarks demonstrate differentiation, which distinguishes two offensive acts to lessen the audience's feelings about the action taken with it is compared to another, perhaps worse, action. In this case, Wilson attempted to reduce the act of murder due to Brown's actions of theft and assault.

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Although the Brown and Johnson families have not received compensation for wrongful death, the cases were moved from state to federal court in May (Hahn, 2015). The trial is slated to begin in 2016 (Associated Press, 2015).

Corrective Action

After Brown's death the FPD made changes to their department so it more closely resembles the demographic it patrols. Weeks after the incident, Jackson suggested tactical changes which included officers wearing body cameras (Hollinshed, 2014). Six months later, Jackson stepped down as Ferguson Chief of Police (Eligon, 2015). This was after the DOJ released its findings which "accused the city of using its municipal court and police force as moneymaking tools that routinely violated constitutional rights and disproportionately targeted blacks" (Eligon, 2015). Although FPD hired Anderson to be their interim Chief of Police in July, he chose to step down four months into six-month term (Ellis, 2015). Anderson's reason for his departure was to tend to his family more. Delrish Moss was hired as Ferguson new police chief in April, who served 32-years as a Miami police officer in March 2016 (Wagner, 2016).

Mortification

While the FPD and SLPD expressed regret for the death of Brown, mortification is only justified through Wilson's words. Wilson represented the police department when he had his deadly encounter with Brown. Wilson's last comment about the situation was "No one wants to cause a life to be lost. No one" (Raftery, 2014, para. 5). While Wilson's words do not hold an "I'm sorry," it is apparent that he expressed some grief and seeks forgiveness from Brown's family. Wilson claimed earlier in the interview that Brown left him no choice and that he had to defend himself.

The success rate of Wilson and the FPD/SLPD

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It is going to take time for this large wound to heal. The DOJ findings about how the police department handled African-American civilians revealed the tension between the two. Although Wilson was exonerated for what happened that day, and the FPD making changes in house to improve encounters with the public, they failed to restore their image.

A Cleveland Problem

There has been a longstanding issue pertaining to the CDP and the citizen they are sworn to protect and serve. The problem of not following procedure and bad decisions has plagued the CDP since the Hough race riots in 1966 (Johnson, 2008). Since then, there has been tension not only between African Americans and the CDP, but with all citizens of Cleveland.

In November 2012, 104 police officers (62 police cars) were involved in high speed chase, which resulted in the death of Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams. The unarmed couple were fired upon 137 times by the time the chase ended (Blackwell, 2013). Of those 137 shots, Russell was hit 23 times and Williams 24. The reason for excessive shooting was due to a misunderstanding by officers of a sound they heard. Before they were chased Russell and Williams were speeding past the Justice Center when officers thought they were being shot at—which was actually a backfire from the car.

The two were chased into a school parking lot where officers fired a barrage of shots. Michael Berlo, who was an Iraqi War veteran, fired 49 shots including 15 from the hood of his car during this encounter. Berlo was acquitted of charges of manslaughter in 2015 (Meyer & Wendel, 2015). The city of Cleveland paid the families of Williams and Russell \$1.5 million each in a wrongful death lawsuit (Caniglia, 2014). This led to the mayor of Cleveland Frank G. Jackson to asked the DOJ to investigate the CDP (Atassi, 2012).

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Weeks before the death of Rice another incident involving the CDP arose involving a mentally ill woman. Thirty-seven-year-old Tanisha Anderson was having a mental episode and family members could not calm her down so they called 911 for help. After law enforcement calmed her down, Anderson began to kick at officers who were escorting her to the police car to take her to St. Vincent Charity Medical Center for evaluation (Blackwell, 2013). Family members said that officers were rough with Anderson and threw her to the ground. She was taken to the hospital where she died. Anderson's family said that she suffered from a bipolar disorder and schizophrenia (Shaffer, 2015). A medical examiner ruled her death as a homicide and she was added to the DOJ's report (Steer, 2015).

Miscommunication leads to a child's death

Anderson's death was dwarfed by another incident that involved the shooting death of a boy in a park eight days later. This was this altercation that sent the public pushing for reform in police department protocol. Yet, this lethal encounter could have been avoided if there were clearer communication between the dispatcher and officers. Tamir Rice was only 12-years old when he was gunned down by police November 22, 2014. Two Cleveland police officers approached Rice while in their police car and shot him on sight. Timothy Loehmann, who had nearly two years' experience in the police force (a rookie in the CDP) fired the fatal shots that killed Rice. His partner Frank Garmback who had 10-15 years' experience drove the police cruiser near the preteen.

A person who was sitting in a gazebo nearby called 911 and told to the dispatcher several times that the gun Rice was holding is "probably fake" (Connor, 2014, p. X). Unfortunately, the dispatcher did not relay that information to officers. Within seconds Loehmann and Garmback shot Rice who was approaching their car believing that the gun he was wielding was real

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Unlike the Garner and Brown case, the public along with investigators had more evidence to go on other than witnesses accounts. The recreation center had a camera that recorded the incident. Although the quality of the recording was fair at best, it told the story of what happened before, during and after the encounter. While actions of the Garner and Brown cases supported the police officers, the recreation center camera told a different story in Cleveland. The CDP attempted to evade responsibility, reduce offensiveness, took corrective action and mortification to reduce the negative criticism they received.

Truth in the video

There are many discrepancies between police reports and what is seen on camera. Law enforcement was unaware that a camera recorded the incident and stated that officers had given justifiable cause why Rice was shot. Corey Shaffer of The Plain Dealer along with MSNBC reported inconsistencies within the given police reports. According to Loehmann and Garmback, they saw a few people with Rice underneath a pavilion next to the center. Loehmann stated that he saw a black gun on the table and saw Rice pick up the gun and put it in his waistband. Deputy Chief of Field Operations Ed Tomba stated “The officer got out of the car and told the boy to put his hands up three times. The boy reached into his waistband, pulled out the gun and the rookie officer fired two shots” (Shaffer, 2014, para. 4). Tomba added that “the child did not threaten officers verbally and physically” Shaffer, 2014, para. 5). One of the shots pierced Rice’s stomach and did significant damage. Rice died the next day.

However, when video evidence was released, it exposed many discrepancies in Loehmann and Garmback police reports. A 30-minute surveillance video was cut into eight minutes for the jury to analyze (Shaffer, 2015). In those eight minutes, it showed that Rice was alone in the park, throwing snowballs and pacing the sidewalk with his airsoft pistol. He also sat

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in the pavilion alone with his head down. During this time, a person from a nearby gazebo called 911, and told the dispatch several times that the gun was probably fake. Yet the message given to officer was that it was a gun (Connor, 2014, para. 3). When police arrived at the scene Rice approached them with his airsoft gun in his waistband in front of the pavilion. He exposed the pallet gun to officers by lifting up his shirt. The police car pulled up closely to Rice and within two seconds Loehmann fired two shots at Rice as he is jumping out of his vehicle. The officers did not administer first aid on Rice. It took 14 minutes for emergency crews to arrive to the scene. Rice's 14-year old sister was nearby when she heard the shots and ran toward her brother. She was restrained by Loehmann and Garmback, placed in handcuffs and put in the back of the police car. Rice was never asked to put down his weapon. There was not anyone near Rice at the time that he was shot. Judge Ronald B. Ardine stated in court that officer records did not support the video evidence that may have gave the officers probable caused of firing upon the boy (Ardine, 2015). Rice never brandished the airsoft gun to reveal if it was real or fake. Also officers could not make that assessment in two seconds. Lastly, Loehmann and Garmback acknowledged that they estimated Rice to be a 20-year old male. On December 28, 2015 a grand jury decided not to indict Loehmann and Garmback for the death of Rice

The Blue Shield of Denial

Police officers are known to have their own, unwritten code that officers do not report co-workers' errors, misconduct or crimes. While it is speculative if officers follow this code when a fatal incident occurs, it brings suspicion as to why these two officers would lie in their accounts as to what happened and many of their follow officers would support them even after video footage was released. Stating facts that did not happen is denial because Loehmann and Garmback

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attempted to exonerate themselves of any wrongdoing. However, as the public learned more about the two officers it became clear why did not tell the whole truth.

Garmback joined CDP in 2008. Two years into his tenure in the city, Garmback was involved in a lawsuit, which stated he used excessive force on Tamela Eaton. Eaton had called police because she wanted an unknown car to be towed because it was blocking her driveway. At the same time, police were already dispatched to Eaton's neighborhood to look for a suspect in a murder (Caniglia, 2014). Garmback and his former partner were in the vicinity and arrested a man that was walking with a woman in front of Eaton's home. Eaton came out because she thought officers were there to tow the car instead she saw them attempting to arrest a man and restraining a woman who was yelling for the officers to stop. Eaton also protested the officer's actions because she did not want anyone arrested. According to the lawsuit, Garmback rushed Eaton, placed her in a chokehold, and tackled her to the ground. His partner followed suit and began punching Eaton (Caniglia, 2014). The city of Cleveland settle with Eaton \$100,000 in order to close the suit (Caniglia, 2014).

Loehmann was a rookie in the CDP. Yet, it is unclear how he was able to join a police force that protects a large city due to unsatisfactory written test scores and a poor performance review (Tobias, 2015). In 2012, Loehmann served in Independence, Ohio for five months while he was in the police academy. Deputy Chief of the Independence Police Department Jim Polak wrote in Loehmann personnel file "He could not follow simple directions, could not communicate thoughts nor recollections and his handgun performance" (Ferrise, 2014, para. 3). Polak also called for the Independence Police Department to relieve Loehmann of duties stating "I do not believe time, nor training, will be able to change or correct the deficiencies" (Ferrise, 2014, para. 5). Loehmann

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was able to slip through the cracks because the Cleveland police did not have a written policy about reviewing public personnel files of the officers they hire (Ferrise, 2014).

Clarifying the history of these officers is necessary because it shows that they have had issues in the past. It is clear that while one officer was deemed mentally unfit to work in a field where someone has to make a critical decision within seconds, the other had cost the city thousands for attacking an innocent bystander. Lastly, these two officers did not deny that they shot and killed Rice, but they denied the actions that led to the 12-year old's death. Moreover, the Cuyahoga County prosecutor Tim McGinty further denied that the officers were wrong in the Rice shooting after they were not indicted. "The outcome will not cheer anyone, nor should it. The death of Tamir Rice was an absolute tragedy. But it was not by the law that binds us a crime" (Cahil, Lowery, & Chokshi, 2015, para. 8).

Evading Responsibility

Tomba pointed out statements where Loehmann and Garmback evaded responsibility by suggesting their actions were justified because their intentions were good. Both officers stated that they were left no choice but to fire at Rice when he refused to put the airsoft gun down after the third demand from police (Dolan, 2015). Even after video evidence was released, the officers supported their claim in justification. President of Cleveland Police Patrolman's Association Jeffery Follmer stated in an interview on MSNBC that Rice still posed a threat and the officers were still justified to use deadly force (Hayes, 2014). McGinty also attempted to help Loehmann and Garmback evade responsibility claiming defeasibility. McGinty stated to a reporter that the incident was "A perfect storm of human error" (Fantz, Almasy, Shoichet, 2015, para. 3). He also said that it was hard for officer to tell if the airsoft gun was real or not because the orange tip was removed.

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Reducing Offensiveness

In an attempt to reduce the outrage from the citizens of Cleveland Tompa tried to reassure the public that the Cleveland Police Department was protecting and serving the city. Tompa attempted to build up the the department's reputation by saying "We don't come to work everyday and want to use force on anybody. That is not what our job is. We're a part of this community" (Shaffer, 2014, para. 8). He used differentiation stating "When an officer gives a command, we expect it to be followed. The way it looks right now, it wasn't followed, but we will continue our investigation" (Shaffer, 2014, para.11). The statement was made before video footage was released. After the video, it was clear that Rice was not given a command. The Rice family filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Loehmann, Garmback and the City of Cleveland. The family filed an eight-page Civil Rights complaint stating "Had the defendant officers properly approached Tamir and properly investigated his possession of the replica gun they would undoubtedly have determined ... that the gun was fake and that the subject was a juvenile" (author, year, p. X) The lawsuit also alleges that the officers did not provide Rice with medical attention for more than four minutes "as he lay on the ground alive and bleeding" (Fieldstadt, 2014, p. x).

Corrective Action

The CDP had been under investigation from the DOJ since 2012. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder investigated nearly 600 use-of-force incidents from 2010-2013 (McCarty, 2014). According to the DOJ's 58-page report, they found that CDP officers engages in a pattern of using excessive force in violation of citizens' constitutional rights. They were quick to pull their guns, often escalating situations and fired their guns at people who did not pose a threat of death. The report also found incidents where officers punched and tasered suspects who were subdued or in handcuffs. Lastly, they cited the city for failing to investigate and discipline officers who

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wrongfully used excessive force, instead they painted them in the most positive light (McCarty, 2014). In May 2015, Mayor Jackson and the CDP signed a decree that brought major reform to police conduct in Cleveland. Highlights of this decree are that officers are no longer be able to use their guns to strike suspects and there was a ban against head strikes (Gomez, 2015).

While the DOJ has made strides with the CDP there are still other areas citizens want address to ensure safety in the city. In a press conference after the case, McGinty called for police officers to wear body cameras. He also called for toy gun makers to create replicas that cannot have the orange tip removed.

Mortification

McGinty asked for the city of Cleveland to come together instead of banding against the police department. He asked that this is a learning process and the department is finding ways to improve its handling of these situations. McGinty issued an apology to Rice's family stating that "it was a tough conversation" speaking with Rice's mother about the grand jury's decision not to indict the two officers (Tamir Rice Grand Jury Declines to Charge Officers, 2015, para. 7). Although the officers did not directly ask for forgiveness the police department's efforts indicate that they are trying to reform to make sure this type of incident does not happen again.

Was the CDP successful

Just like the NYPD and the FPD, the CDP was not successful in restoring its image. The history this police department has with its citizens has overshadowed the significant steps the department is taking to reduce unnecessary violence. Just like the other two departments, it is going to take time for citizens to forgive and move on. The main factor that makes the CDP image hard to repair is that Loehmann and Garmback lied about what happened in their altercation with Rice.

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Chapter Five: How successful was Image Restoration?

These three police departments had separate issues dealing with the citizens in each city, the public, and media. The deaths of Garner, Brown, and Rice also reopened a huge debate as to whether citizens should feel safe around law enforcement. Since the summer of 2014, the media has publicized other cases of unarmed African Americans such as John Crawford III, Akai Gurley, Romain Brisbon, Eric Harris, Walter Scott, Sandra Bland, and Freddie Gray. There are more, but these received the most recognition. Of the six listed three officers (Gurley's case, Scott's case, and Harris case) were charged with manslaughter. However, because of the acts of a few officers the some of the public especially in the African American community has become hostile.

The NYPD, FPD, and CDP were not successful in restoring their images because the citizens they protect have not been given enough time for them to forgive the officers who, in their eyes, committed murder. Although these departments have strived to reform protocol and conduct among its officers, no timetable can be set on forgiveness.

A great example is the unrest in Ferguson on the one-year anniversary of Brown's death. A peaceful protest, turned violent, people began to loot and destroy property just as if the decision not to indict Wilson was freshly rendered to the nation.

It is understandable for the public to feel hostility toward law enforcement, especially since these situations did not need to escalate to a persons' death. Some media outlets may say African American men and women are the target of law enforcement and they have the right to retaliate. However, it is important to dig into these cases and read instead of being spoon fed by what the media. For instance, in the Brown case, the initial report did not state that Brown roughed up a store manager and stole one box cigars. In the Garner case, it was not mentioned

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until later that he had numerous run-ins with the NYPD and over 30 arrests. These two cases would not have ended in death if Garner and Brown had simply complied with officers. Garner refused to be arrested by police and was placed in an illegal chokehold (officers could have used a different tactic to arrest Garner). Brown attacked an officer and charged him for an unknown reason (if Wilson carried a Taser, Brown may still be alive today). Rice is the only case where the victim did not break any law or refuse to comply with police. He was simply playing with a toy gun in a park and the dispatcher, Loehamm and Garmback made errors that led to a 12-year old's death.

Forgiveness is the most difficult thing a person can do. For a race that has been oppressed and targeted in the past by law enforcement, forgiveness seems like an impossible feat. Although revenge is easy (the two officers who were killed in retaliation for the deaths of Garner and Brown), it is not the right answer. Change did not come with retaliation nearly 51 years ago when African Americans were given full rights to vote after being physically attacked and did not break any law. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

“We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies,”
(Safire & Safir, 1990, p. 147).

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Image restoration is difficult to accomplish because it takes a lot to persuade the public that a change has been made. In many cases a person's image could be tarnished and never return to what it once was. The main component that someone can use when restoring their image is to not only to use the strategies of denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification, but to allow time to pass after the incident.

In the cases of Garner, Brown, and Rice, the police departments vigorously attempted to restore their image in order earn the forgiveness of the community. Unfortunately, due to past transgressions from each department this pushed the public to the brink of rebellion and, in New York and Ferguson, to seek revenge for the lives that were lost. The people of Ferguson along with other cities and counties among the area of St. Louis felt the pinch of the courts and government that oppressed them with unnecessary fines and tickets. Some may call this racism because the majority of the areas tyrannized were majority African American. Cleveland citizen have dealt with overzealous officers who continued not to place the safety of the public first. But they have not rioted.

Not every officers does an inadequate job. Just like every common person, officers are prone to make mistakes. It just so happens that their mistakes are held to a higher standard because their duty is to protect and serve citizens within their jurisdiction. This is not an excuse for the tragedies this paper examines. Garner and Brown's lives did not have to be lost if things were done properly between officer and suspect. Rice's death on the other hand, was an unnecessary blunder caused by a dispatcher leaving out details, and officers not treating the scene with delicacy.

Time is an important factor dealing with any issue pertaining to image restoration. It takes a special person to easily forgive another for transgressions that hurt them or someone close to

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them. As stated earlier these three police departments will slowly see the public forgive them for what has happened, however, the public may never forget. Although the DOJ is guiding these three departments toward reformation, the same feeling feeling of suspicion and doubt about whether the police have their best interests at heart will arise from the public if similar situations are mishandled.

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